



## United States Senator Tim Johnson Washington, DC 20510

President Kennedy signed legislation in 1963 making it illegal to pay women less than men for the same work. Today, 38 years after that law was enacted, women are still earning substantially less than their male counterparts.

Many people are quick to point out that women, on average, work fewer hours than men, build up less seniority before leaving a position, and are more willing to accept lower-paying positions than their male counterparts. While these and other factors do help to explain a portion of the difference between average pay for men and women, it is clear that a gap still remains that cannot be attributed to any of those factors. Numerous studies have revealed that women working in similar positions with similar education and experience still earn less than their male counterparts for the same job.

By some calculations, a 30-year old woman with a college degree who works at a \$20,000 per year job will lose more than \$500,000 dollars to the "wage gap" during the course of her lifetime. While others dispute these numbers, it is clear that low wages—whether earned by male or female workers—can put a terrible strain on families struggling to make ends meet. I truly believe that offering working families a livable wage is one of the best ways we can promote real "family values."

It isn't news to anyone earning a paycheck that lower income affects more than today's pocketbook. Lower incomes mean lower Social Security retirement and disability benefits, lower balances in retirement accounts, such as 401(k) plans, and fewer additional dollars coming from cost-of-living adjustments. Lower incomes, however, do not necessarily mean lower housing costs, lower utility bills, or cheaper health care.

I support efforts to close the wage gap, and am a cosponsor of Senator Daschle's legislation that would strengthen the Fair Labor Standards Act to better protect workers from discrimination. But I will also work to provide better economic opportunities for all workers. The prosperity of the past few years has done much to improve the wage scale and financial prospects for American families. I hope that we will be able to resume economic expansion and create new opportunities for growth throughout the years to come.

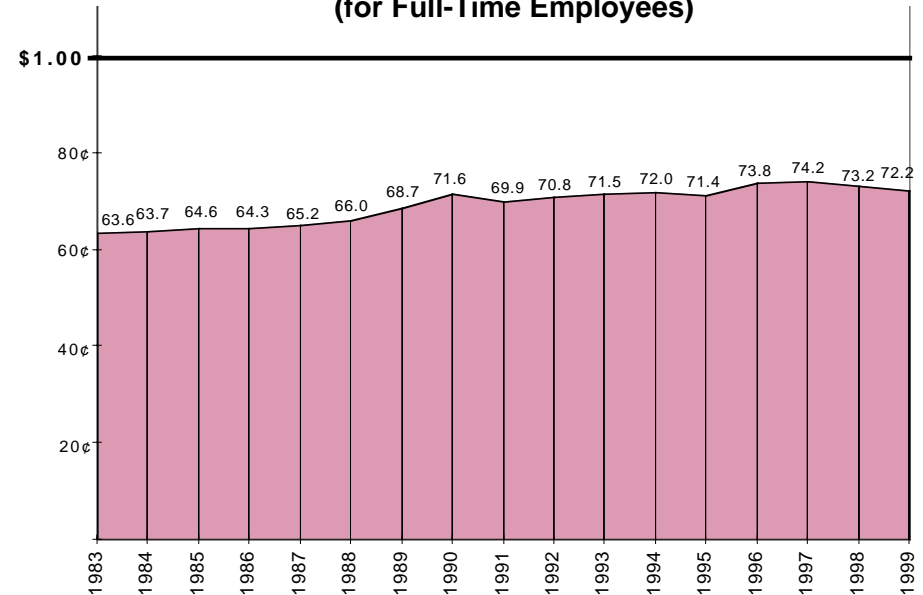
Sincerely,

Tim Johnson

## Nationally:

### Wages Paid to Female Workers Relative to \$1.00 in Wages Paid to Male Workers

(for Full-Time Employees)



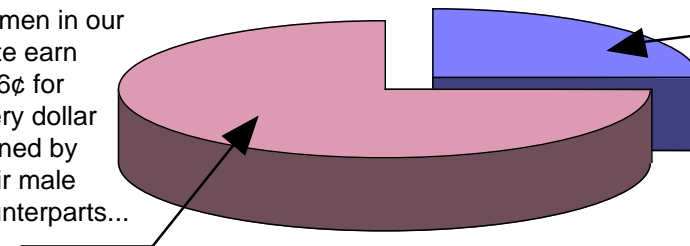
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics (based on median weekly earnings data for wage and salary workers age 16 or older who worked full time)

## In South Dakota:

The picture is only slightly better.

Women in our state earn 74.6¢ for every dollar earned by their male counterparts...

...Which leaves a 25.4¢ gap between women and men.



Source: Institute for Women's Policy Research, 1996

## **By the Numbers:**



South Dakota women rank the fifth highest in the nation in terms of their earnings relative to the earnings of their male counterparts.



South Dakota also has the fifth highest percentage of women in the workforce.



However, South Dakota ranks 50th in the nation in terms of the percentage of employed women who hold managerial and professional positions (23.5%)



And South Dakota ranks 51st in the nation in terms of median annual earnings by women (\$13,429).

Source: Institute for Women's Policy Research, 1996

## **For More Information, Contact Senator Tim Johnson:**

### **ABERDEEN**

320 S. 1st St, Suite 103  
P.O. Box 1554  
Aberdeen, SD 57401  
(605) 226-3440

### **RAPID CITY**

405 East Omaha St.  
P.O. Box 1098  
Rapid City, SD 57701  
(605) 341-3990

### **SIOUX FALLS**

715 S. Minnesota Ave.  
P.O. Box 1424  
Sioux Falls, SD 57101  
(605) 332-8896

### **WASHINGTON, D.C.**

United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510  
(202) 224-5842

e-mail: [tim@johnson.senate.gov](mailto:tim@johnson.senate.gov)

Or call toll-free

from anywhere in South Dakota:

**1-800-537-0025**

**<http://johnson.senate.gov>**



## **The Wage Gap**

### **What It Means To South Dakota Women**

by

U.S. SENATOR  
**TIM JOHNSON**